

2006

Annual Report

Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

DASA Division of Alcohol
& Substance Abuse



September 1, 2006

Dear friends:

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the 2006 Annual Report of the Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction. The report highlights our mission, accomplishments, and future goals. Our member volunteers are dedicated individuals whose passion is to help individuals and families who are impacted by chemical dependency/addiction.

The past year has been an important and busy year for the Council as it was marked by new initiatives in the ever-expanding substance abuse prevention and treatment field. Of particular significance are the Access to Recovery (ATR), Washington State Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (WASBIRT), and the State Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG) projects. These programs bring additional federal funds into our state and enhance our ability to deliver services to youth and families in our communities, and close the treatment gap.

The Council is grateful to the continued support of the Governor and the Legislature. We are now in the second year of the treatment expansion project, which provides services to Medicaid-eligible individuals and which promises cost offsets in social and medical arenas.

We have made a special effort to meet with county alcohol and drug administrative/advisory boards and Tribes throughout the state by rotating our meetings to different locations. This enables us to learn of the different needs of our communities, and to advocate for those needs. We continue to meet our statutory requirements by advising the Department of Social and Health Services on policies and programs for youth and families affected by alcohol and other drugs. We are committed to ensuring services are delivered to Washington State's diverse population through a culturally competent workforce.

We encourage you to get involved in your community. Talk to your legislators about the importance of substance abuse prevention and treatment. We now have ample data to demonstrate that treatment works, and individuals can become healthy and productive members of their communities.

Please join us!

Sincerely,

Gunthild Sondhi, Chair

Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

Our Mission

Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

The Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction is established under RCW 70.96A.070, enacted in 1972. We are dedicated volunteer advocates who advise and recommend to the Department of Social and Health Services rules, policies, and programs that will benefit: individuals and their families with alcoholism/addictions; families and individuals in high risk environments; and the larger community.

Department of Social and Health Services

The mission of the Department of Social and Health Services is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in need. We will help people to achieve safe, self-sufficient, healthy and secure lives.

Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse

The Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse promotes strategies that support healthy lifestyles by preventing the misuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and support recovery from the disease of chemical dependency.

Recommendations

To promote safer and more vibrant communities, and a healthier, more productive citizenry, the Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction makes the following recommendations:

1. We endorse the five strategic priorities set forth in the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse's (DASA) Strategic Plan 2007-2011, and urge all necessary steps be taken to support DASA in:

A. Closing the treatment gap between those who are eligible and in need of treatment and those who, because of financial constraints, actually receive it;

The Citizens Advisory Council is pleased by the Governor and Legislature's enactment of treatment expansion, which is resulting in substantial increases in services to low-income, Medicaid-eligible adults and youth. We expect that treatment expansion will result in substantial savings resulting from reduced emergency room use, medical and psychiatric hospitalization and major medical services, and healthier and increasingly productive individuals in more vibrant communities.

B. Providing treatment alternatives to incarceration;

The Council applauds the Governor and Legislature's continuing efforts to expand treatment alternatives to incarceration under the Criminal Justice Treatment Account, and the increase in the number of county and tribal drug courts. Diverting individuals to treatment will reduce the need for incarceration, prevent recidivism, and make it possible for individuals to make a safe transition into the community.

C. Implementing common screening and assessment protocols for co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders and linking them with integrated treatment;

Improved diagnostic tools hold out the hope of providing better targeted, more effective treatment to individuals suffering from co-occurring disorders. The Council notes the significant efforts now being made to assist these individuals through the Integrated Crisis Response/Secure Detoxification and Integrated Case Management pilot programs.

D. Reaffirming its commitment to evidence-based, targeted prevention, and implementing efforts to combat underage drinking;

The Council is pleased by DASA's efforts in implementing the Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant to ensure prevention efforts are data-driven and outcome-based, and the targeting of underage drinking. Underage drinking is not only destructive to youth in the present, but increases the likelihood they will become serious alcohol abusers/ alcoholics as adolescents and adults.

E. Implementing a program for the prevention and treatment of problem and pathological gambling, including the training of professionals in the identification and treatment of problem gamblers.

The Council supports new efforts to treat individuals and their families who suffer from problem/pathological gambling, and note that a very large proportion of problem/pathological gamblers also suffer from substance abuse and addiction.

- 2. We urge continued support for the recruitment and training of chemical dependency professionals, both in enabling current treatment professionals to care for patients with increasingly complex needs, and to recruit new individuals into the profession. We applaud DASA's efforts in establishing the annual Treatment Institute, and renewed efforts in working with institutions of higher education.**
- 3. We commend DASA in successfully seeking out grant opportunities to enhance both planning and service delivery. Access To Recovery (ATR), Washington State Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (WASBIRT), the Adolescent Treatment Coordination Grant, and the State Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG) are all excellent examples of how new opportunities can extend the range and scope of alcohol and drug prevention, intervention, and treatment approaches available in Washington State.**

Who We Are

The statute under which the Citizens Advisory Council operates requires that it be composed of not less than seven nor more than 15 members. The Council is mandated to be broadly representative of citizens who have been recipients of treatment for alcoholism or other drug addiction and who have been in recovery from chemical dependency for a minimum of two years. At least two-thirds of the Council's members should be former recipients of treatment and not be employed in any occupation related to chemical dependency. The remaining members are to be chosen for their demonstrated concern with alcoholism and drug addiction, and drawn from the business, organized labor, judiciary, and minority communities.

The Council continues to seek out qualified individuals who can contribute to our ongoing work, and invites interested individuals to contact us. (Contact information on back.)

Current Members

John Abrahamson recently retired as a clinical supervisor at the Providence Hospital Addictions Recovery Center in Centralia, overseeing outpatient programs for both adults and youth. He also serves as a board member of the Pierce County Alcohol/Drug Advisory Council.

Sally Cassella (Vice Chair) served as a chemical dependency counselor at the Grant County Alcohol and Drug Center and for Grant County Juvenile Services. She is actively involved in community groups and outreach in rural areas. Her professional career has been focused on families and parenting skills.

Grace Creasman teaches and supervises practicums for future chemical dependency professionals enrolled in the Alcohol/Drug Studies Program at Eastern Washington University. She has a strong interest in adult education and in alcohol/drug abuse prevention on college campuses.

Phillip Gonzales is a retired army veteran who works as an analyst for the Department of Social and Health Services. He is a member of the National Association for Education in Medicaid, the Many View One diversity team, and is active in the community promoting awareness and diversity in the workplace. His interest is in prevention among teenagers and substance abuse education for family members.

Dean Henderson is a retired stockbroker actively engaged in recovery from alcoholism. He tutors in urban Seattle elementary schools, and has a strong interest in prevention and treatment among school-based youth.

Robin Hopkins is a retired real estate appraiser who served for eight years on the National Board of the Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church. In recovery, he has a strong interest in the coordination of government-sponsored and faith-based efforts in the treatment of alcohol and drug addiction.

David McCallum is a retired member of the United Steel Workers of America. In recovery from alcoholism, he spent several years working with the employee assistance committee for his local union. He joined the Council because he knows treatment works.

Guy McMinds is a fisheries expert, and serves as natural resource advisor to the Quinault Indian Nation. A member of the Quinault Tribe, he served as a member of the State Incentive Grant Advisory Board, overseeing initiatives to reduce and prevent substance abuse among youth. He has adopted and raised several children affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects.

Laura Mithoug is a senior supervisor with the City of Seattle's Department of Transportation. She is actively engaged in recovery, and believes in the importance of substance abuse treatment for the entire family.

William Quick is the former supervisor of Field Operations for the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. With a career-long commitment to children and prevention services, he was the first chief of the state's Office of Drug Abuse Prevention, and helped develop several youth-oriented prevention programs that became national models. He is currently a member of the Thurston County Child Protection Team, and serves as a court-appointed special advocate for children.

Gunthild Sondhi (Chair) is a certified prevention professional, and is currently an adjunct professor within the Department of Social Work, Eastern Washington University, where she teaches suicide and substance abuse prevention. She retired as Spokane County Community Service Department's substance abuse prevention coordinator, but continues her work in the prevention field. Her passion and commitment earned her the 2001 Washington State Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Award.

Recent Accomplishments of the Citizens Advisory Council

This past year, the Citizens Advisory Council has continued our advocacy as an independent voice committed to ensuring the availability of quality alcohol and drug prevention, intervention, and treatment services to all Washington residents. High points of our activity included:

- **Implementing the Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG)** – Two members of the Council serve on the SPF-SIG Advisory Council as the \$11.75 million SPF-SIG Grant is implemented. The four goals of the project are to: 1) Prevent the onset and reduce the progression of substance abuse, including underage drinking; 2) Reduce substance-related problem behaviors in communities; 3) Build prevention capacity and infrastructure at the state and community level; and 4) Infuse data into all processes of prevention program decisionmaking.
- **Sponsoring a Research Subcommittee** – The Council sponsors a Research Subcommittee of more than 70 members. Researchers are drawn from institutions across the Northwest to share their findings with each other, and to build the science base necessary to improve prevention and treatment outcomes.
- **Holding a Public Hearing on the Federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant** – The Council convened a public hearing on the annual federal Block Grant that funds prevention and treatment services in Washington State. Special interest was indicated in ensuring tribal needs for these services are being met.
- **Spearheading the Tribal Gathering** – The Council took a leadership role in planning the annual Tribal Gathering, attended by 230 individuals, including members of Washington's 29 sovereign Indian nations and four urban Indian organizations. The Gathering focused on building strategies aimed at preventing and reducing alcohol and drug use among tribal members.
- **Commenting on a Proposal to Expand a National Registry of Evidence-Based Practices (NREPP)** – Responding to a proposal from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Council indicated that, while supporting the use of evidence-based practices and continuous quality improvement, the inclusion of consumers and consumer advocates in the process of expanding NREPP would likely result in a proposal very different from that being considered.
- **Reaching Out to County Boards and Tribes** – The Council continues to reach out to county alcohol and drug administrative/advisory boards and Indian Tribes. The Council met with members of county boards across the state, and heard presentations from representatives of tribal programs so that the Council is in a better position to advocate for their needs.

Overseeing Annual Peer Review

The federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant administered by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse requires an annual peer review of 5% of treatment providers who receive funding. This process is overseen by the Council. This year, Council members made several on-site visits, and shared perspectives with reviewers.

This year's review found many providers taking a holistic approach to treatment and including family members in both treatment and recreational activities. There continues to be a trend of offering multiple services in the same physical location, including mental health services, housing support, and medical services. Providers are investing in computer hardware and software systems to improve efficiency, which is especially necessary in areas where there continue to be counselor shortages.

The Council recommends that DASA prepare a list of computer consultants for programs to use in upgrading technology to improve and streamline clinical practice. Housing resources for individuals in recovery remain in short supply, and the Council recommends DASA work to create additional substance-free housing resources. DASA should continue to welcome faith-based service providers in providing treatment and ancillary services, particularly housing.

Lastly, the Council noted that agencies are seeing patients with increasingly complex physical and mental illnesses. These complex clients require more expertise, and case management and collaboration with other providers. Reimbursement rates are often too low to pay for the additional time counselors require to assist patients outside of providing direct treatment services. The Council emphasizes the importance of upgrading the skills of current chemical dependency professionals to make use of new, evidence-based practices, including the use of pharmacological interventions.

Council Development

During the past year, the Citizens Advisory Council continued to make significant strides in furthering its own development. These include:

- Incorporating educational presentation as a regular feature of Council meetings. In the past year, there were presentations on: the Government Management, Accountability, and Performance (GMAP) process; treatment expansion; chemical dependency professional workforce development and counselor shortage; co-occurring disorders; gambling treatment; tribal issues; and the Mental Health Transformation Grant;
- Sponsoring member attendance at training and outreach activities. In the past year, these included: the annual Treatment Institute; Drug Summit in Tacoma; the annual Tribal Gathering; the annual Prevention Summit; and the Media Literacy Conference;
- Nurturing strong, supportive, collaborative relationships with DASA staff, and expanding our understanding of the legislative and budgeting process; and
- Having members attend local county alcohol and drug administrative/advisory board meetings, and extend their involvement in diverse substance abuse-related activities to increase their knowledge and expertise.

Future Council Initiatives

The Citizens Advisory Council is planning initiatives in a number of areas:

- To place the Council in the forefront of advocating for continued chemical dependency treatment expansion, and increasing awareness among local governments, local elected officials, and legislators about the benefits that result from the delivery of evidence-based substance abuse prevention and treatment services;
- To work with the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse and local communities and institutions of higher education to attract new professionals to the chemical dependency field, and further dialogue about steps necessary to address the shortage of chemical dependency professionals;
- To expand advocacy for evidence-based prevention strategies, including increased emphasis on underage drinking;
- To continue to advocate for a compassionate and equitable policy related to drug offenders, with a strong emphasis on alternatives to incarceration, including drug courts, and on the provision of quality alcohol and drug prevention, treatment, and aftercare services;
- To participate in efforts to bridge the gaps between research, policy, and practice, and a focus on training and support to bring research to the treatment field;
- To promote efforts to prevent problem and pathological gambling, and provide treatment to individuals and families in need of it;
- To expand working relationships and ongoing dialogue with representatives of Indian sovereign nations, including assisting in planning the annual Tribal Gathering, as we work together building alcohol- and drug-free communities; and
- To invite members of local alcohol and other drug administrative/advisory boards to address the Council at its meeting across the state regarding local concerns and initiatives.

Join Us!

The Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction is always looking for individuals who can contribute to our ongoing work of advising the Department of Social and Health Services regarding the provision of quality substance abuse-related services, and working with communities to reduce the impact of alcoholism and other drug addiction.

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